

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in  
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

FROM PROFIT TO PLANET: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE GLOBAL  
CAR MANUFACTURING THROUGH ELECTRIFICATION AND AUTOMATION

SVITLANA KIFYUK

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

João Loureiro Rodrigues

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## **Abstract**

During the climate changes of our time, the automotive industry has faced both sustainable technology challenges and significant market opportunity. The first section of the dissertation demonstrates how the way of operating profitably while creating a positive environmental impact has driven the company performance in the simulation Business in Practise. For the analysis, the main functions of Operations, Marketing, and Finance were considered to show how each unique function is independent but, at the same time, must be integrated with one another to achieve the same company goal. Sustainable practices within the processes were explored separately. The second section is dedicated to personal reflection on the simulation, highlighting critical incidents and their further impact on individual performance and skills development. Both sections conclude with key ideas and main professional and personal learnings from the simulation.

**Keywords:** Practical Business Application, Automotive Sector, Environmental Sustainability, Strategic Planning, Operational Efficiency, Financial Modeling, Data Analytics, Performance Metrics, Team Collaboration, Scenario Analysis, Decision-Making Processes, Real-World Implementation, Value Creation

## **Section I. Firm Analysis**

### **1. Introduction**

Climate change is one of the major challenges facing the world in the last decade. To respond globally, policymakers, companies, organizations, and young initiatives at different levels are uniting to achieve the same goal: to reduce the negative impact on the environment and provide a greener future for the next generations. Recent studies indicate that a significant impact on global warming attributed to the car manufacturers. The automotive industry is responsible for 10% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, producing 80 million vehicles yearly (World Economic Forum, 2024). To drive the transition to electric vehicles, regulatory institutions across the United States, China and Europe have established targets and standards aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provided by the United Nations, putting further pressure on the industry. As a result, has observed an increasing demand for electric vehicles; for instance, in China last year, one in four cars sold was an electric vehicle (McKinsey, 2024). At the same time, responding to changes in consumer preferences, meeting innovative market trends, and combating fast-moving competition threaten car companies on a daily basis. How a company that operates in three regions can maintain its leading position in the long-term in a win-win situation - being profitable while increasing value on one side and making a sustainable impact on the environment through electrification and automation on the other - will be demonstrated by the global car manufacturer ``Value Drive`` in the simulation of the Business in Practise.

#### **1.2 Review of the company**

The Value Drive is a simulated global automobile manufacturer located in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, with indirect online distribution via its digital platform and sales partners worldwide. The company has set a clear vision to revolutionize mobility through innovation, producing electric vehicles that are accessible to all, consequently fostering a greener and

more socially responsible world. Its mission is to lead in manufacturing outstanding electric vehicles that exceed in performance, safety, and environmental impact. The company value social, environmental, and financial sustainability, innovation, customer experience, performance, safety, and excellence. Decision-making at Value Drive is coordinated by the five departments: Operations, Human Resources, Finance, Innovation and Marketing. The timeline of the simulation spans six fiscal years and is analysed quarterly throughout the Section I. The product line in the Q1 includes electric, diesel and gasoline vehicles (Table 1), and by the last quarter (Q28), Value Drive has achieved 100% electrification of its vehicles (Table 2).

### **1.3 Structure of the Section I**

The first part of the dissertation begins by introducing several motives that have caused a global need for the transition to electrification and automation in the automotive industry. Further connection to a specific car manufacturer that implemented such a transition briefly overviewed a key performance indicators of the firm, its business model, vision, mission, and long-term perspective. The review of the Operations, Marketing and Finance functions, supported by detailed company data, thoroughly explains the concepts, features, and insights for the successful definition and implementation of a sustainable strategy to facilitate the electrification transition of an automotive company. To provide a comprehensive analysis, reviews are linked with comparisons to real companies, industry trends and consumer preferences. Finally, the conclusion presents an overview of the key ideas covered, the integration of functions throughout the company's processes, and the concepts learned.

## **2. Operations Review**

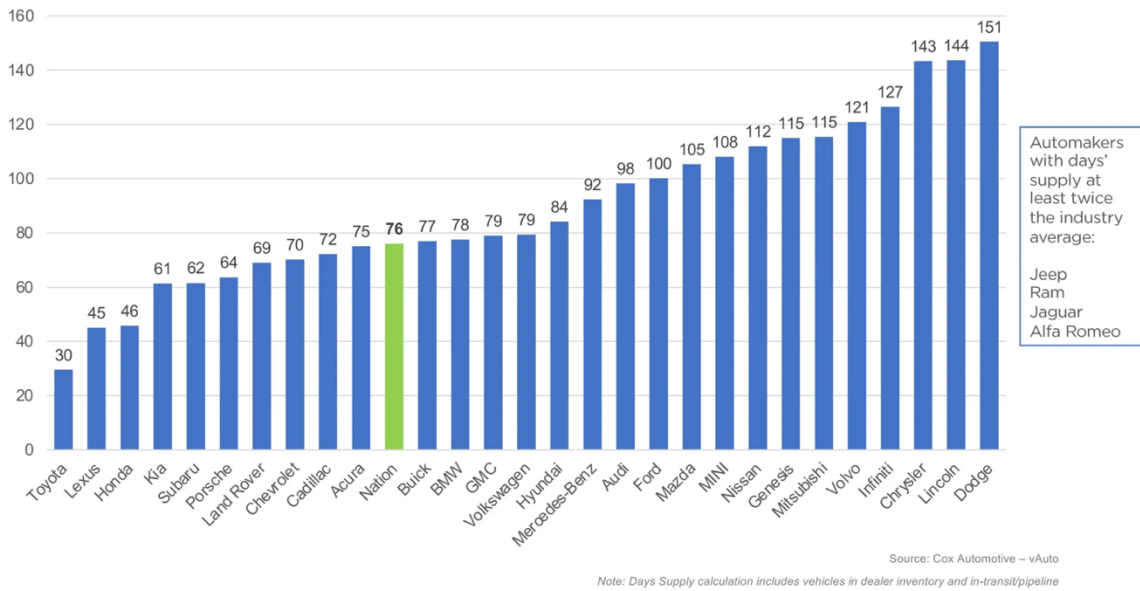
The Value Drive operates globally, managing day-to-day supply chain activities in the U.S., China, and Europe. In Q4, the manufacturer had a diversified portfolio that included gasoline, diesel, and electric vehicles, featuring packages for autonomous driving and

various battery technologies. Due to the consumer preferences in different regions, the production of the pickup trucks, sports car and luxury car was concentrated in three factories in the U.S., while city car production took place in two factories in China. Additionally, SUV and sedan production was concentrated in three factories in Europe. To align with Value Drive's long-term perspective of achieving full electrification and making vehicles accessible to all while efficiently utilizing current capabilities, the Operations team began defining step-by-step processes for the upcoming quarters, keeping an eye on the future years to effectively implement a sustainable strategy (Wells, 2019). Taking into account efficiency and factory utilization during this period, the Value Drive completely downsized its gasoline and diesel vehicle production, particularly ``Business 135H``, which experienced lower sales. The company began to heavily invest in the expansion of both current and new electric vehicles, making its first green investment of \$200M at reducing water consumption to lower wastewater treatment costs and direct emissions classified as Scope 1 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. To take another step toward a sustainable supply chain, the Operations department also invested in carbon dioxide offset supplies to start reducing its indirect emissions classified of Scope 3, thereby enhancing its ESG performance. As a result, by the end of the first fiscal year, the company achieved a Net Operational Profit of \$691M, which was on the 1.6% higher than at the beginning of the year. Following the positive tendency, the Sustainability Rating increased more than twofold, rising from the 17.1% to 59.3%. Additionally, investments in green practices established the Green CapEx Ratio of 36.6% in the Q9. To continue its sustainable growth strategy, the Operations team consulted with other departments to analyse how sales demand, competition, industry trends, and financial budget can influence future decisions. Collaboration with Innovation department focused on further technological developments for the electric vehicles, such as AI Implementation for Levels II and IV of Autonomous

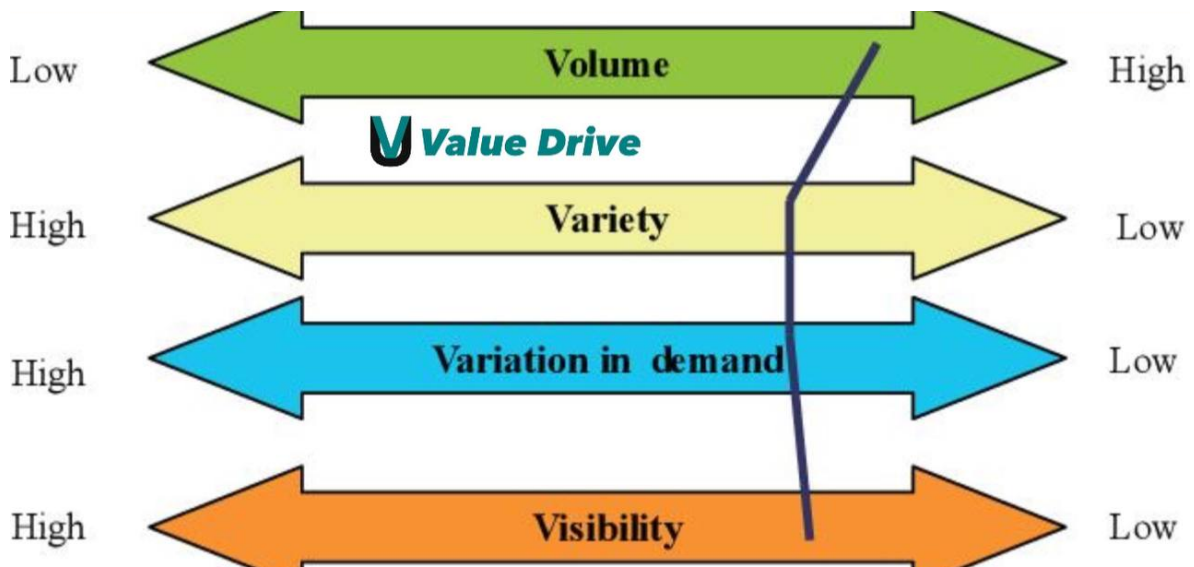
Driving, the producing of Sodium-ion Batteries for new electric models, and Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication of the Level II feature package (Khan, 2021) (Table 3). In the support of operations decisions, the Human Resources team hired a technology-skilled staff and made investments in sustainability trainings. In the second and third fiscal years, Value Drive explored a circular economy policy and invested \$120M in a recycling partnership model. By entering into partnership, the Value Drive significantly enhanced its sustainability rating, making the company brand more attractive to environmentally conscious consumers. In this fiscal year, the company identified the urgent need to reduce CO2 emissions in China's energy sector by 4-6% to meet government's carbon intensity target until 2025 (CREA, 2024). To respond the challenge, the Value Drive has made the next range of the green investments (El-Khalil, 2020). For instance, \$400M was allocated to minimize waste reduction, allowing the company to maintain low operating costs while also helping to preserve the environment. An additional \$500M was allocated to energy investments, specifically for the installation of solar panels and enhancing energy efficiency. The increasing demand for electric vehicles within its supply chain, with a market potential of \$7.882M in Asia, \$6.176B in Europe and \$7,110B in the U.S., prompted the expansion of two new factories in China and one new factory in Europe, with plans for exports to the Americas. To keep pace with global trends in electric vehicles such as technological innovations, environmental awareness, and the transition to electrification, the company launched new electric models, including the small car "Microbe", the pickup "US-Pickup", the sedan "EU-Biz", and the super car "LUX-Embourg". Additionally, the product development of the city car "CH-CityE" and the "EU-SUV" was implemented. Entering the market with these new car models resulted in increasing marketing expenses, pushing the marketing spend-to-revenue ratio above 2%. Starting from Q11, Value Drive achieved its primary goal of having 100% electrified product portfolio. At the same time,

Rockwell Automation Report indicated that vulnerability to cyberattacks has escalated, with 97% of automotive manufacturers facing this issue, making cybersecurity a significant challenge for the automotive industry when compared to other business sectors (AutomotiveDive, 2024). To protect Value Drive's supply chain and customers from potential cyberattacks and risks that could disrupt the company's day-to-day activities, the Operations team requested the Innovation department to invest of \$400M in cybersecurity in Q15. During this development phase, the company's Net Profit of \$460M was one of the lowest in its operational history. Such low metrics were attributed to launching new models into the market, regulatory changes in China, and significant technology investments. However, the Operations team forecasted a growing trend in Net Operating Profit starting in Q19. To maintain its leading position in the market against competitors – holding 36.29% market share in the Americas, 42.05% in Asia, and 40.57% in Europe – and to build a strong brand image, the Operations team decided to allocate an additional investment of the next \$500M for ISO 14001 Certification. This milestone led to the first trade-off between the Operations and Finance teams, as this investment would reduce the company's Credit Ratio from A to A- and result in a sharp decline in financing cash flow by 33%, dropping from -\$1,651,123M to -\$2,451,490M. Nevertheless, to retain its market leadership and improve sustainability ratios, the teams opted to prioritize operational performance over the finance performance objectives (Fahimnia, 2015). From the middle of its development until last year, Value Drive allocated its full electric production across four factories in Europe, an equal number in Asia, and three factories in the U.S., with model allocation tailored to customer preferences regarding price, model, and regional trends. Detailed allocation is provided in the Marketing Review. The confirmation of a strong operations strategy, bolstered by collaboration with other departments, showed a growing trend in revenue, which increased from \$4,564,360M in Q5 to \$8,931,666M in

Q28, reflecting a 91% increase compared to Q5. Cumulative E-Cars sales reached \$3,579,398M in Q28. The average days of inventory for Value Drive during this entire period was 59 days, while the industry average was 76 days in 2024.



The difference between the industry average and the company’s performance attributed to the specific sustainable strategy employed by Value Drive.



Until the last quarter, Value Drive achieved a product portfolio with net-zero CO2 emissions, a 100% Green Capital Ratio, a 100% of factory utilization, and 0g/mile CO2 emissions, which will be detailed in the Sustainability part of the Section I. The success of

Operations is closely tied to collaboration with the Marketing department, as the integration of Marketing and Operations ensures that product offerings align with customer expectations and market demands. This synergy enables Value Drive to effectively promote its sustainable initiatives while enhancing overall operational performance (Scott, 2002).

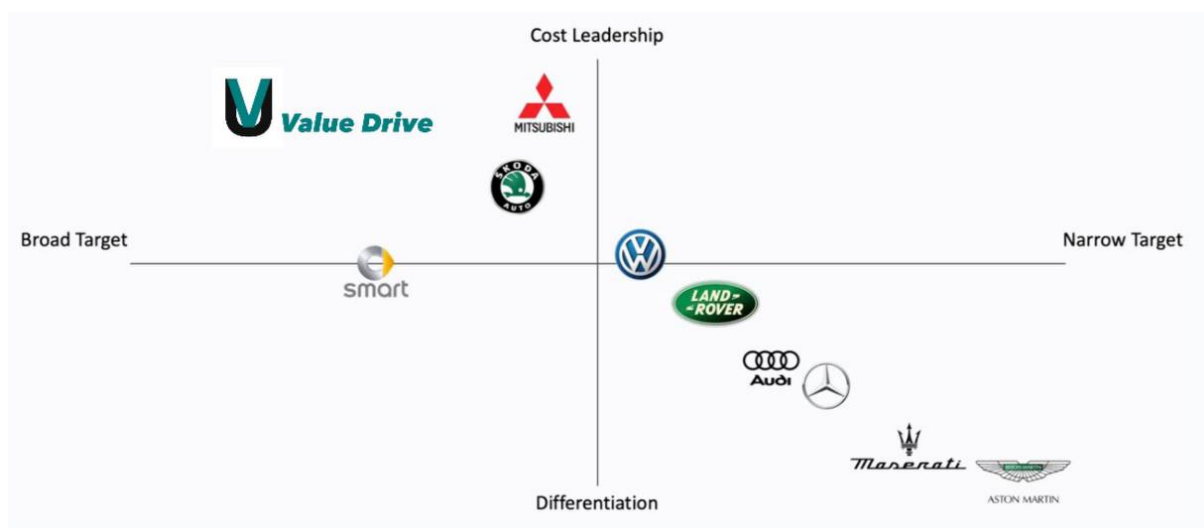
## 2.1 Marketing Review

Value creation for customers is a key responsibility of the Marketing department. In conjunction with the Operations team, the Marketing department consistently monitors both expected and unexpected market changes, global trends, and customers needs. Before the company’s operations began, the Marketing team engaged in intensive discussions about how to deliver the right product at the right price, to the right place, at the right time, while differentiating strategies across three locations. The diversity of these locations necessitated primary market research to develop three distinct marketing strategies, with further segmentation for Asia, the Americas, and Europe. These strategies targeted and positioned the company in alignment with consumer preferences and global trends (Deloitte, 2024).

Drivers of brand choice	China	Germany	India	Japan	Rep. of Korea	Southeast Asia	US
Price	32%	55%	48%	58%	49%	54%	59%
Product quality	52%	47%	65%	48%	51%	62%	57%
Vehicle performance	53%	30%	61%	49%	55%	57%	52%
Vehicle features	37%	39%	62%	48%	31%	51%	45%
Quality of overall ownership experience	28%	31%	45%	8%	27%	37%	38%
Brand familiarity	36%	39%	43%	21%	25%	32%	34%
Previous service experience	19%	18%	22%	14%	17%	21%	21%
Previous sales experience	10%	27%	15%	10%	5%	13%	17%
Brand image	38%	15%	50%	19%	22%	33%	16%
Availability of battery electric vehicles/hybrid options	33%	13%	36%	22%	25%	24%	14%

■ Most commonly cited

In alignment with the company’s strategy and mission, the Marketing team crafted a unique value proposition for customers worldwide: a diverse product line accessible to all in terms of price, featuring the latest technological innovations and a positive sustainability impact on the environment. The Value Drive segment target is a customer segment that value high quality product with low price and sustainability impact (Kotler, 2016). Taking into account the customer characteristics (Table 4) for each region, Marketing team has developed the following strategies (Avery, 2017). In China, the company will produce the city and small electric cars with level IV autonomy and a features package ranging from Level I, with a price range of \$26,400 to \$32,919 per unit. In Europe, the company will manufacture luxury electric cars, sedans, and SUVs, also with level IV autonomy, offering features packages from Level I to Level IV, with prices ranging from \$57,199 to \$100,859 per unit. In the U.S., the company will produce electric pickups, sport cars, and small cars, all featuring Level IV autonomy with a price range of \$31,504 to \$121,839 per unit (Table 5). All types of cars will include Extended Sodium-ion battery. Considering the competitive landscape, Marketing team of the Value Drive has drafted a positioning map.



As the company began heavily producing new products and investing in product development in the initial quarters, the Marketing team initiated its marketing implementation plan. Starting from Q4, Value Drive’s marketing team began allocating

funds to the marketing mix, focusing on TV and Online campaigns to target a broad range of customers across different ages and social levels. Additionally, the Marketing team invested \$15M in partnership with social media influencers (Hultink, 1997). Influencer marketing leverages the credibility and reach of popular social media personalities to endorse products and connect with niche audiences, driving brand affinity, and consumer trust. To empower the company to make informed decisions, optimize marketing campaigns, and personalize customer experiences – resulting in higher ROI, increased customer satisfaction, and enhanced loyalty - the Marketing team has made an additional investment of \$30M in the Data-Driven Marketing Analytics. In collaboration with Human Resources team, the company has also introduced marketing trainings for its employees. Continuing to strengthen its brand image, in Q12, the Marketing team made its largest investment of \$100M in an E-Commerce platform (Emerson, 2003). This strategic move allowed the company to implement a direct sales model, selling vehicles directly to customers through its own stores and online channels. Such an approach not only provides the company with greater control over the customer experience but also facilitates direct interaction with consumers, fostering customer loyalty. To maintain this strategy, the Marketing team continued to invest in social media and online campaigns, further enhancing customer promotions at points of sale (Chaffey, 2019). By following marketing trends and differentiating itself from competitors, Value Drive has invested in an electric vehicle branding campaign to raise awareness about brand's commitment to sustainability as a leader in the growing electric mobility sector. As a result of these integrated marketing tactics, Value Drive achieved a leading market share in all of three regions: 36.29% in the Americas, 42.05% in Asia, and 40.75% in Europe. The company recorded the highest sales for models such as the ``CH-City E``, ``Microbe``, ``EU-Biz``, and ``US Micro``. Among other notable achievements, the company realized Return on Sales of 17% over the last three

quarters. The revenue generated from electric cars reached a record of \$18,086.52M, achieving a 100% revenue ratio for electric vehicle. Cumulative E-Cars sales reached an impressive total of 3,579,398 units in the last quarter. These outstanding results underscore the Marketing department's successful strategies, which are closely intertwined with the financial performance of the company.

## **2.2 Finance Review**

No company department can operate effectively without financing. Before implementing major decisions into the company, the finance department ensured that the Value Drive's financial strategy is well-integrated with its overall strategic objectives, promoting sustainable growth and success. Financial activities in collaboration with all departments began with adjustments to account payables and receivables. The company maintained 15 days of account payables and 40 days of account receivables throughout each fourth quarter, during its operational period, from an additional gains perspective (Brigham, 2016). This approach generated to the company additional \$76.12M in gains, \$98.05M in increased monthly revenue, and \$1,93B in savings on material costs, resulting in 2.1% increase in EBITDA over six fiscal years. During the first three fiscal years, the Finance team issued the \$6,699B in Green Bonds to fund green investments in next-generation e-drive modules, offset supplier CO2 emissions, waste reduction, enhance energy efficiency, implement vehicle-to-vehicle communication, facilitate external battery recycling, and improve cyber security within the Operations and Innovation departments. To finance other initiatives, such as building new factories, establishing a power charging network, and executing marketing campaigns, the company secured a bank loan of \$11,375B. Simultaneously, discontinuing the car models such as ``Business 135H``, ``4x4E``, ``PU225G``, ``SportE``, ``CityE``, ``E-Pickup``, ``E-Biz``, ``C2E``, and ``LUX`` generated an additional \$9,588M into the company. By the end of the third fiscal year, Value Drive issued shares, resulting in proceeds of \$1,315B and a lower debt ratio of 46.7% (Ross, 2016). Following

the share issuance, Value Drive's share price was fixed at \$385.31/per share, one of the lowest in its history. However, by the end of the last fiscal year, the share price improved significantly to \$860.22/per share, reflecting a remarkable growth of 99%. Beginning in Q17, Value Drive successfully began paying off its debt. In Q23, the Finance team encountered a trade-off situation with operations regarding funding investments without exceeding budget constraints. The departments reached a solution to proceed with an investment that involved a share buyback, which resulted in a decrease of \$2.499M in proceeds from new shares and a reduction of \$2.149M in capital reserves. This decision led to a downgrade in the credit rating to A- and an increase in the debt ratio from 41.50% to 48.73%. Starting in the fourth fiscal year, Value Drive began to reap the benefits of previous investments, which contributed to increased revenue and the discontinuation of underperforming car models. Overall, the financial health of Value Drive showed promising results. The Return on Invested Capital in the last quarter was 7.58%, indicating a growth of 38% from the first quarter (Table 6). The average cost of equity for the company was fixed at 8.1%, which aligns with the industry average for the automotive sector (PwC, 2024). The credit rating dipped below A- only once, in Q9, due to the company's significant investments which required substantial funding. Return on Equity increased from 24.48% to 33.47%. Additionally, Value Drive achieved a Weighted Average Cost of Capital of 5.16%, positioning it favorably against competitors. The average debt ratio stood at 48.03%, which is twice as favorable as the industry average (MacroTrends, 2024). Continuing this positive growth trend, the company saw a sharp increase in free cash flows, rising from \$392M in Q4 to \$2.086B. This surge indicates the company's ability to reinvest in growth opportunities or new projects while maintaining the flexibility to respond quickly to market challenges or opportunities. Such a strong cash reserve positions the company to effectively weather economic downturns. Finally, Value Drive's value added amounted to \$3,676.19 million. In conclusion, Value Drive exemplifies a company that successfully

integrates financial strategy with sustainable growth, adaptability, and robust performance metrics. Its strategic financial management, commitment to environmental responsibility, and ability to generate significant value position Value Drive as a leader in the automotive industry.

### **2.3 Sustainability Overview**

Sustainability is synonym with Value Drive. From production activities to customer experiences, sustainability holds the highest priority in all decisions, processes, and final outcomes. An experienced team of Operations, Marketing, Finance, along with integration of Human Resources and Innovation departments is united by a shared vision of global sustainable development vision at every step of the process (Hoffman, 2024). Operations team optimized business processes and invested in sustainable practices of Scope 1. Not only has Value Drive achieved 0g/mile CO2 fleet emissions and effectively contributed to the fight against climate change, but also invested \$200M into Water Consumption Reduction, \$400M into Waste Reduction and \$500 into EMAS Certificates. Finance team made extensive use of Green Bonds to finance the investment activities, leveraging high green capital expenditure and maintained Green CapEx Ratio of 56,4%. In addition, the Value Drive's Green Capital Ratio has steadily increased to 76,4% reflecting the company's commitment to sustainable financial practices with CAGR of 26,3% over the last 20 quarters. The company has also achieved a Corporate Social Responsibility of 100% demonstrating the excellent commitment to working towards a sustainable business. The Value Drive proud to report that the company has not incurred any type of financial penalties due to unsustainable business practices and received over \$708,7M of cumulative CO2 bonuses, the highest amount among the competition. The most noticeable difference in CO2 emissions reduction, where CO2 in energy generation reduced from 80,000 tons to 11,424 tons over 20 quarters, was with the installation of a large Solar panel plant. Further investments into of \$150M into Energy Efficiency and \$100M into Energy Management System integrated the energy production grid to optimise the performance off the

generation and transmission system, lowering GHG and pollutant emissions. Marketing team focused on promoting the company's electric vehicles lineup aiming to raise awareness about the Value Drive's commitment to sustainability and position it as a leader in the growing electric mobility sector. The Human Resources empowered employees and build a sustainable workforce towards a greener future. The Value Drive invested \$10M into the creation of Sustainability Policy Training focused on educating employees about the company's policies and practices. The sustainability awareness training, which also required an investment of \$15M, raised employees' awareness of sustainability issues. In order to continuously improve the working environment, the Value Drive conducted regular employee satisfaction surveys, to understand employee needs and adjust salaries, fostering a positive and supportive work culture, and promoting employee growth and well-being. Switching multinational meetings to online reduced resource waste, boosts productivity and employee health, promoted digital transformation, and supported sustainability. In addition, the company have developed a comprehensive training program to provide the employees with the needed sustainability skills to ensure that the team can achieve its goals.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The global automotive industry takes place one of the most responsible for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the world, facing both significant challenges and opportunities in terms of climate change and evolving consumer demands. Prioritizing electrification and automation, the company is able to balance desirable profits with environmental responsibility and sustainable impact as it quarter by quarter has achieved the Value Drive. To showcase step by step activities, insights and learnings, and how they led to sustainable long success for the analysis was chosen the three mainline functions: Operations, Marketing and Finance. The reason is explained by simple cycle of any business: Operations transform materials (inputs) into outputs, Marketing generates sales of such outputs and Finance involves financial resources and capital for inputs

(Lee J. Krajewski, 2021) . Each of the three functions is unique, has its own skill areas, primary responsibilities, processes, and decision domains but in the same time they are working to achieve same goal – create an enterprise value. Operations is the heart of the company underlying all functions in a business. Value Drive is strategically positioning itself as a leader in the global automotive market by embracing sustainability and innovation. The company's operations across the U.S., China, and Europe demonstrate a commitment to diversifying its portfolio while responding to regional consumer preferences. By focusing on the production of electric vehicles and reducing reliance on gasoline and diesel models, Value Drive is aligning its operations with its long-term goal of full electrification. In conjunction with Operations, the Marketing strategies for producing city cars in China, luxury electric vehicles in Europe, and electric pickups in the U.S. illustrate a coherent plan that leverages the company's manufacturing capabilities to meet specific market demands. The inclusion of Extended Sodium-ion batteries across all vehicle types highlights a focus on innovation and sustainability that aligns with the company's mission. As the Operations department focuses on optimizing production processes and investing in next-generation technologies, the financial backing from Green Bonds and loans has enabled the company to transition towards electrification and improve energy efficiency. The decision to discontinue underperforming car models further illustrates an operational strategy that prioritizes profitability and responsiveness to market demands. Simultaneously, the Marketing department's efforts to position Value Drive as a leader in sustainable mobility have been supported by robust financial performance, allowing for targeted campaigns that resonate with environmentally conscious consumers. This synergy between Finance, Operations, and Marketing ensures that Value Drive not only meets current consumer expectations but also anticipates future trends, ultimately driving value creation for stakeholders. Finally, Value Drive exemplifies a strong commitment to sustainability through integrated efforts across various departments. By prioritizing sustainable practices, investing

in green technologies, and fostering employee engagement, the company not only enhances its operational efficiency but also positions itself as a leader in the electric mobility sector. This holistic approach not only addresses environmental challenges but also contributes positively to the company's financial health and corporate reputation. To conclude, the analysed example of the Value Drive must to be an inspiration for other car manufacturer as a great win-win example, where company can be extremely profitable, create value for its customer, be technological leader among the competition and make the positive sustainable impact on the society, environment and world. The Value Drive – manufacturer that impacts the world.

## **Section II.**

### **1. Introduction**

The Section II is dedicated to my personal experience while performing as a Director of Finance within a team. With prior experience working into teams in student organizations, business games and work environment, I was expecting to provide the smooth adaptation of each team member into collaboration atmosphere, where everyone follow communication, understand the tasks, value respect, reliability, trust, efficiency and make decisions asking opinin of everyone. However, from the bedinning of the simulation the team has faced a cultural clush. Personally, I have never experienced this situation in the work environment before the simulation. Starting from the first meeting each team member was contributed into the conversations of introducing yourself, expressing personal expectations and discussing possible strategy for our company, except one member. My primar thoughts of the reasons were based on the psychological analysis of the person. At first, this situation seemed to me that it was a shy state of the human psychology which charactized by feelings of fear and discomfort in social engagement (Korem, 2023). How it influenced the team work, business outcomes, overall atmosphere inside the team and what I have learned from the incident will be discussed in detailes in the ``Critical Incident 1``. Since the team's work environment in

terms of business decisions was clear and everyone contributed to the discussion to achieve a common decision throughout 23 quarters, the conflicts wasn't expected anymore, specially on the finishing line. Nevertheless, agreeing in controversial situations and finding a compromise in a such situation has never been a problem for me until I faced a trade-off between finance and operations function in the last quarters of the simulation. From professional point of view, performing as a Finance Director I suggested to stand with finance department, do not provide the Operations with funding for additional sustainable practices and keep financial metrics on the leading position. However, the Operations convinced other to support their part, despite the fact that such an investment will significantly worsen all the financial indicators that we have built in the previous 23 quarters. The result and personal learnings of the conflict will be indicated in the ``Critical Incident 2``. After exploring two critical incidents, the Section 2 is finished with an overall conclusion of the personal performance, lessons learned and skills developed.

### **1.2 Critical Incident 1**

From the beginning of the simulation, our team encountered a significant cultural clash that presented unique challenges. This situation not only highlighted the challenges of fostering collaboration in a international team but also underscored the importance of understanding varying motivations and behaviors in a professional scope. During the active team discussions on the testing rounds of the simulation, one member of a team remained noticeably disengaged. The initial thoughts were centered around a psychological analysis of this individual. Primarily, I was considering two possible reasons: the main reason was the shyness with discomfort in social interactions, leading to avoidance behaviours which are aligned with the concept of social anxiety as fear of negative evaluation in group settings (Eisenberg & Lennon, 2018); On the other hand, I assumed the possibility of laziness or a lack of interest, which could reflect broader issues related to motivation and engagement in team settings. The disengagement of

one team member was not only a personal concern but was noticeable the rest of the team. We recognized that such behavior could negatively impact our overall performance and hinder our ability to secure a leading position in the simulation. As the result of a discussion, we have conducted that such behaviour could be possible only in the test round and on the real simulation that team member will be more active. To follow the business strategy and keep all the functions clear and integrated with each other, we also has decided that will specially take care of the function that person. My opinion that it was a shyness and disinterest in teamwork remained unchanged. Therefore, I started to suggest how it can be possible make the engagement with a team interesting for such person. Research suggests that fostering a sense of belonging and support within teams is crucial for enhancing collaboration and performance (Baumeister & Leary, 2005). Definitely, I took into consideration how to get a person interested in interaction with other team members so that such a desire arises in the person naturally. Practices such as inviting shy individuals to informal gatherings, for instance, lunch, can enhance team involvement by creating a comfortable setting that encourages social interaction and relationship building, ultimately reducing anxiety and promoting participation (Zhang, Wang, & Li, 2020). Despite the team's efforts to enhance involvement by inviting the shy individual to informal gatherings, such as lunch, and creating a comfortable environment for social interaction, the passive behavior of the member remained unchanged. This persistence in disengagement compelled the rest of the team to take on additional responsibilities to compensate for the lack of participation, which became a significant concern. As a result, the workload for the active team members increased, leading to heightened pressure and stress. The problem wasn't resolved until a group discussing of a primar peer evaluation results with a professor. On that day, the passive member was absent. The rest of the team started to discuss with the professor the possible reasons of the situation. The professor suggested from his similar experience in the work environment that the main reason of the conclit is the cultural

clash. The team never assumed that before but agreed with a professor. It was the last days of the simulation and any decisions to increase an engagement of the passive person would not significantly change the business metrics for the better but the topic of cultural clash was a new for me, I never experienced it before and started to explore the topic to pretend the similar experiences in the future. Reserch showed that cultural clashes often arise from differences in values, beliefs, and communication styles among team members, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict (Hofstede, 2001). The incident has triggered several thought processes for me, including a reflection on the impact of cultural diversity on team dynamics and my awareness of the need for cultural sensitivity and adaptability within the team, as ignoring these differences led to ineffective collaboration (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012). The experience of navigating a significant cultural clash within my team during the simulation has profoundly impacted my personal and professional development. Initially, I approached the situation with a focus on psychological factors influencing team dynamics, but this incident ultimately opened my eyes to the complexities of cultural diversity in collaborative environments. This challenge taught me the importance of fostering an inclusive atmosphere where every team member feels valued and understood. I learned that assumptions about disengagement, whether rooted in social anxiety or lack of interest, can obscure deeper issues related to cultural differences. The insights gained from the professor regarding the cultural clash prompted a critical reflection on my leadership approach and highlighted the necessity of cultural sensitivity. I now recognize that effective communication and understanding differing values and beliefs are essential for successful collaboration. Additionally, the heightened stress and increased workload on active team members due to one person's disengagement underscored the ripple effect individual behaviors can have on the entire

team's performance. This realization has instilled in me a greater sense of responsibility to actively engage all team members and to address any signs of disengagement promptly. Moving forward, I will take these lessons to heart by prioritizing open dialogue and inclusivity within teams, actively seeking to understand my colleagues' backgrounds, and fostering environments that encourage participation from all members. By embracing cultural differences and promoting collaboration, I aim to enhance team dynamics and drive better outcomes in future collaborative efforts. This experience has not only equipped me with valuable skills in managing cultural diversity but has also reinforced my commitment to being a more empathetic and effective leader.

### **1.3 Critical Incident 2**

As the simulation approached its conclusion, a significant conflict emerged within our team regarding a new investment opportunity presented to the Operations team. This situation created a trade-off that directly affected the Finance department. As the Finance Director, I advocated for prioritizing the financial health of the company by refraining from providing additional funding for the Operations team's proposed sustainable practices. My stance focused on maintaining robust financial metrics, which had been carefully developed over the previous 23 quarters. However, the Operations team successfully persuaded the majority of the group to support their initiative, despite the potential negative impact on our financial indicators. This led to a conflict of interest, as I was primarily concerned with safeguarding the company's financial integrity, while the rest of the team prioritized investments in sustainability, even at the expense of financial performance. Ultimately, I had to concede to the majority decision. This conflict was a pivotal moment for me, triggering a deep reflection on my role and the values I hold as a leader (Smith, 2024). I found myself grappling with the implications of prioritizing sustainability over immediate financial health. The push for sustainable investment made me realize that the collective values of the team were shifting towards a more socially

responsible perspective, which I had to acknowledge. The situation also prompted me to confront my own biases regarding financial metrics. Moreover, this experience underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in leadership, as discussed in conflict incident 1. The conflict highlighted how differing values and beliefs can lead to misunderstandings and tension, particularly in a diverse team setting. Recognizing that sustainability is increasingly becoming a central focus for businesses worldwide, I began to understand the necessity of integrating financial and operational perspectives to foster a more holistic approach to decision-making. In reflecting on this experience, I have gained valuable insights that will shape my future approach to teamwork and leadership. Firstly, I learned the importance of being open to diverse perspectives and the need to balance financial health with long-term sustainability goals. Embracing a more collaborative decision-making process can lead to innovative solutions that align with both financial metrics and social responsibility. Secondly, I realized the significance of engaging in open discussions about conflicting interests within teams (Meyer, 2024). Creating a safe space for all opinions to be voiced can help mitigate feelings of isolation among team members, fostering a culture of trust and respect—an essential factor in effective collaboration (Edmondson, 1999). Lastly, this experience has reinforced the idea that leadership involves navigating complex trade-offs and making decisions that align with both short-term and long-term goals. In conclusion, the conflict during the simulation has profoundly shaped my perspective on leadership and collaboration. By embracing the lessons learned from this experience, I will strive to create a more inclusive and open environment in future collaborative efforts, recognizing that the integration of diverse viewpoints is essential for achieving sustainable success in any organization.

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

The experiences I encountered during the simulation have been instrumental in shaping my understanding of leadership, collaboration, and the complexities of cultural diversity within

teams. The significant cultural clash in the first incident prompted me to reflect deeply on the psychological and sociocultural dynamics at play in team interactions. It highlighted the necessity of fostering an inclusive environment where each team member feels valued and understood, regardless of their background. This awareness has underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in my leadership approach. Similarly, the conflict regarding the investment opportunity for the Operations team in the second incident has reinforced the need for balancing diverse perspectives and priorities. It has taught me the importance of engaging in open discussions about conflicting interests, recognizing that such dialogues are essential for effective collaboration and trust-building among team members. By creating a safe space for all voices to be heard, I can help mitigate feelings of isolation and encourage active participation, ultimately enhancing team performance. Moving forward, I am committed to applying the lessons learned from these experiences in my future endeavors. I will prioritize fostering open dialogue, inclusivity, and understanding within teams while remaining conscious of the broader implications of our decisions. By embracing cultural differences and promoting collaboration, I aim to enhance team dynamics, drive better outcomes, and cultivate an environment where every team member can thrive. This journey has not only equipped me with valuable skills in managing cultural diversity and conflict but has also reinforced my commitment to being a more empathetic and effective leader. I intend to utilize the Discovery Insights profiling questionnaire, which employs a color-coded system to assess personality types. This tool has been incredibly beneficial for our team, as it has allowed us to explore our individual personalities and understand how we can collaborate more effectively. I found it particularly fascinating to learn about my own personality traits as revealed by the test. Engaging with this questionnaire not only provided insights into how we can work together more harmoniously but also prompted me to reflect on my unique characteristics and how they influence my interactions within the team. This experience has deepened my understanding of

the diverse personalities at play, highlighting the importance of fostering an environment where everyone's strengths are acknowledged and utilized. By gaining insights into our different communication styles and working preferences, we can tailor our interactions to enhance collaboration and minimize misunderstandings. This understanding is invaluable not just for our current project but also for future experiences, as it equips us with the tools needed to navigate diverse team dynamics effectively. Regarding the peer evaluation, I have little to add, as it closely aligned with my self-evaluation. This consistency indicates that I have a clear and accurate understanding of my performance and contributions within the team. It also reflects positively on the feedback culture we have established, where team members can openly assess each other's strengths and areas for improvement. As I continue to apply what I have learned from the Discovery Insights questionnaire, I am confident that I will be better prepared to foster inclusive environments, encourage open dialogue, and leverage the unique contributions of each team member in any future collaborative efforts. As I continue to grow in my professional role, I will strive to embody these principles, ensuring that I contribute positively to any team I am a part of, ultimately leading to sustainable success for both the organization and its members.

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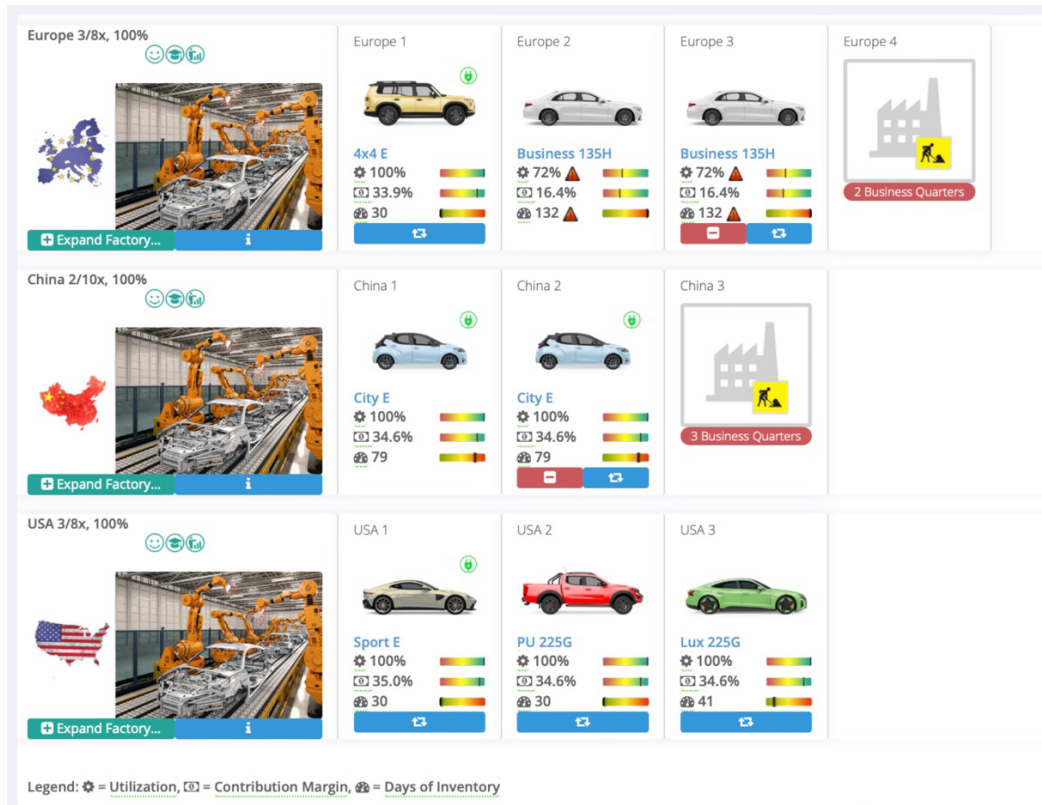
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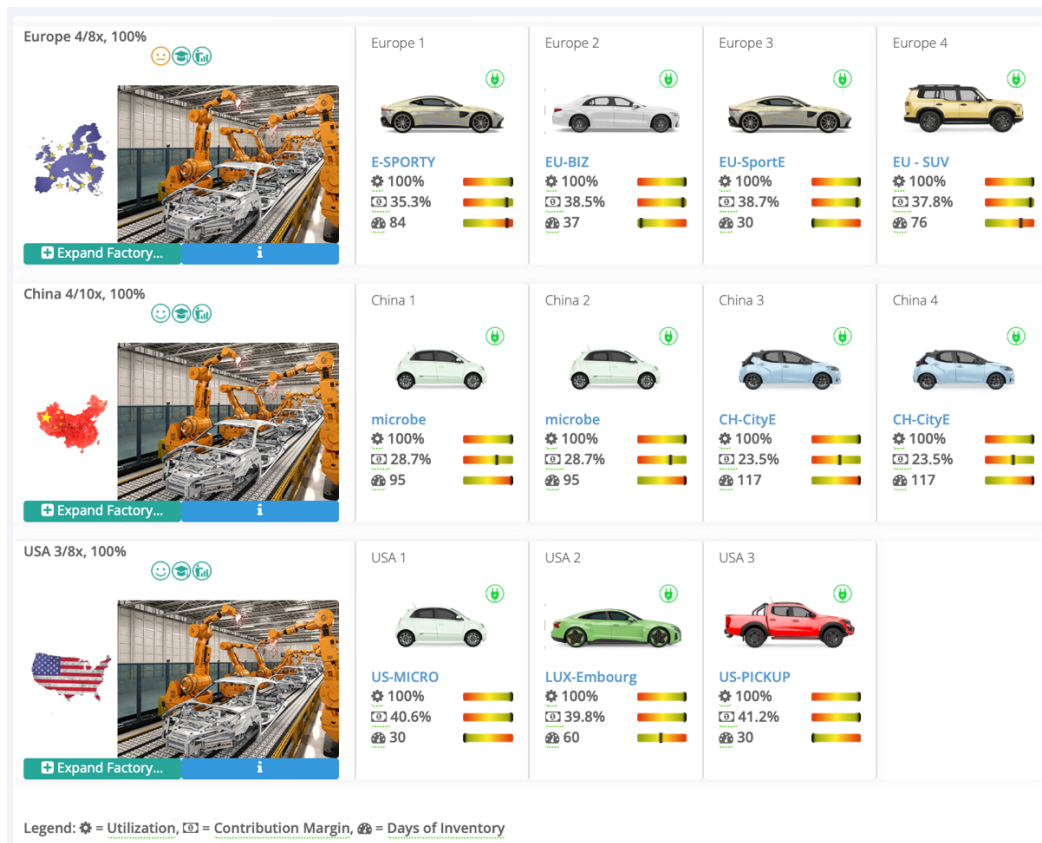
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# Appendix

## Table 1. Product line in Q4



## Table 2. Product line in Q28



## Tables 3. Product Development

### Motor Types: (only Conventional)

**Gasoline:** Typically produce higher emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other pollutants compared to diesel and hybrid cars. They contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change and negative health effects.

**Diesel:** While diesel engines tend to emit less CO2 than gasoline engines, they produce higher levels of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter, which can contribute to air pollution and respiratory problems.

**Hybrid:** Generally have lower emissions compared to traditional gasoline and diesel cars, especially in urban driving conditions where they can operate in electric-only mode. Hybrid technology reduces fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions, contributing to improved air quality and reduced environmental impact.

### Engine (only Conventional)

The more powerful the engine, the higher the demand, but at the same time CO2 emissions and production costs increase.

### Safety Extras: (only Conventional)

**Level 1:** Pedestrian Detection and Automatic Pedestrian Braking: Systems that use cameras and sensors to detect pedestrians in the vehicle's path and automatically apply the brakes to prevent or mitigate collisions. Traffic Sign Recognition (TSR): Uses cameras or sensors to identify and display traffic signs such as speed limits, stop signs, and lane markings on the vehicle's dashboard or head-up display, helping the driver stay informed of road regulations.

**Level 2:** includes Level 1 and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and Traction Control System (TCS): ESC helps maintain vehicle stability and control during emergency maneuvers or slippery road conditions by automatically applying brakes to individual wheels, while TCS prevents wheel spin during acceleration to improve traction. Backup / Surround-View Cameras: Backup cameras provide a rear-view image to assist with parking and maneuvering in reverse, while surround-view cameras offer a 360 degree view.  
Benefit: Demand (+)

**Level 3:** includes Level 1-2 and Forward Collision Warning (FCW) and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB): FCW alerts the driver to an imminent collision with a vehicle or obstacle ahead, while AEB automatically applies the brakes to mitigate or avoid a collision if the driver fails to respond in time. Blind Spot Monitoring (BSM): BSM detects vehicles in the driver's blind spots and provides visual or audible warnings to prevent lane-change collisions.  
Benefit: Demand (++) | Marketing Efficiency (+)

**Level 4:** includes Level 1-3 and Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC): Automatically adjusts vehicle speed to maintain a safe following distance from the vehicle ahead. Some systems can even bring the car to a complete stop in traffic and resume driving when conditions allow. Lane Departure Warning (LDW) and Lane Keeping Assist (LKA): LDW alerts the driver if the vehicle begins to drift out of its lane without signaling, while LKA actively steers the vehicle back into its lane to prevent unintended lane departures.  
Benefit: Demand (++++) | Marketing Efficiency (+)

### Feature Package (only EVs):

**Level 1:** Autonomous Valet Parking (AVP): AVP enables vehicles to autonomously find parking spaces, park, and retrieve themselves when summoned by the driver via a smartphone app. Biometric Driver Identification: This system use facial recognition or fingerprint scanning to authenticate the driver's identity, allowing for personalized vehicle settings and enhanced security.

**Level 2** includes Level I, plus Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) Communication: Allows vehicles to communicate with infrastructure such as traffic lights, and traffic management systems, providing real-time traffic information and optimizing traffic flow. Dynamic Vehicle Morphing: Dynamic vehicle morphing technology enables vehicles to change their shape or size based on driving conditions, optimizing aerodynamics, and energy efficiency.  
Benefit: Demand (+)

**Level 3** includes Level I+II, plus Biometric Health Monitoring: Tracks the driver's vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure, providing alerts and recommendations to ensure driver well-being and safety. Augmented Reality Windshield Display: Displays overlay digital information, such as navigation directions, traffic alerts, and points of interest, onto the windshield, enhancing situational awareness and reducing distraction.  
Benefit: Demand (++)

**Level 4** Feature Package includes Level I-III, plus Modular Battery Design: Electric vehicles with variable battery enables automakers to customize the size and capacity of the battery pack to meet different vehicle specifications and performance requirements. Flexible Placement: Variable battery installation allows for flexibility in the placement of battery packs within the vehicle. Batteries can be located in different areas, to optimize weight distribution and vehicle handling.  
Benefit: Demand (++++)

### Autonomous Driving (only EVs)

**Level 1:** Driver Assistance: At this level, the vehicle features driver assistance systems such as cruise control or lane-keeping assistance. The driver remains responsible for monitoring the environment and controlling the vehicle at all times.

**Level 2:** Partial Automation: Vehicles at this level can perform certain driving tasks, such as steering, acceleration, and braking, under specific conditions. However, the driver must remain engaged and ready to take over control of the vehicle at any time. Benefit: Demand (+)

**Level 3:** Conditional Automation: At this level, vehicles can perform most driving tasks under certain conditions or environments, such as highway driving. The vehicle can manage acceleration, braking, and steering without constant driver supervision. However, the driver must be prepared to intervene if the system requests, typically with a sufficient warning time. Benefits: Demand (++)

**Level 4:** High Automation: Vehicles at this level can perform all driving tasks under specific conditions or within defined environments without human intervention. The vehicle can operate autonomously without requiring driver intervention in most situations. Benefits: Demand (++++)

### Battery Technology (only EVs)






























**Standard Li-ion:** Lithium-ion batteries are known for their high energy density, which allows them to store a large amount of energy in a relatively small and lightweight package. They are relatively expensive compared to other battery technologies.  
Benefit: Demand (+)

**Extended Li-ion:** Lithium-ion batteries are known for their high energy density, which allows them to store a large amount of energy in a relatively small and lightweight package. They are relatively expensive compared to other battery technologies.  
Benefit: Demand (+)

**Standard Sodium-ion:** Sodium-ion batteries have the potential to be more cost-effective than lithium-ion batteries, as sodium is more abundant and less expensive than lithium.  
Benefit: Demand (++) , Cost (-)

**Extended Sodium-ion:** Sodium-ion batteries have the potential to be more cost-effective than lithium-ion batteries, as sodium is more abundant and less expensive than lithium.  
Benefit: Demand (++++) , Cost (-)

**Table 4. Consumer Preferences**

	Location	Preference	Rating
	Americas	Battery Technology: Extended Sodium-ion (NA)	+++
	Americas	Autonomus Drive: Level IV	+++
	Americas	Engine: High	++
	Americas	Autonomus Drive: Level III	++
	Americas	Autonomus Drive: Level II	++
	Americas	Motor Type: Diesel	++
	Americas	Motor Type: Hybrid	++
	Americas	Battery Technology: Extended Li-ion	+
	Americas	Battery Technology: Standard Sodium-ion (NA)	+
	Americas	Autonomus Drive: Level I	+
	Europe	Motor Type: Hybrid	+++
	Europe	Autonomus Drive: Level IV	+++
	Europe	Battery Technology: Standard Sodium-ion (NA)	++
	Europe	Battery Technology: Extended Sodium-ion (NA)	++
	Europe	Autonomus Drive: Level III	++
	Europe	Autonomus Drive: Level II	++
	Europe	Motor Type: Diesel	++
	Europe	Battery Technology: Extended Li-ion	+
	Europe	Engine: Medium	+
	Europe	Autonomus Drive: Level I	+
	Asia	Autonomus Drive: Level IV	+++
	Asia	Autonomus Drive: Level III	++
	Asia	Battery Technology: Extended Sodium-ion (NA)	++
	Asia	Motor Type: Hybrid	++
	Asia	Motor Type: Diesel	++
	Asia	Battery Technology: Extended Li-ion	+
	Asia	Battery Technology: Standard Sodium-ion (NA)	+
	Asia	Engine: Medium	+
	Asia	Autonomus Drive: Level I	+



**Table 6. Financial Ratios**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28
<b>Simulation</b>	4.89%	4.85%	4.85%	4.38%	3.95%	3.30%	2.49%	3.46%	3.44%	4.00%	3.40%	4.05%	3.82%	2.96%	2.08%	2.48%	1.98%	2.66%	4.03%	4.82%	5.74%	5.88%	6.13%	6.29%	7.29%	7.15%	7.58%	
<b>WACC</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	6.18%	6.12%	6.12%	6.13%	6.13%	6.03%	6.01%	5.84%	5.82%	5.81%	5.82%	5.81%	5.91%	5.90%	5.88%	5.76%	5.73%	5.71%	5.66%	5.68%	5.71%	5.64%	5.53%	5.35%	5.25%	5.19%	5.16%	
<b>Debt Ratio</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	48.87%	48.00%	48.01%	48.71%	47.86%	50.80%	54.98%	52.18%	46.47%	45.20%	44.73%	49.89%	48.88%	48.71%	49.33%	47.24%	43.84%	41.87%	44.73%	40.14%	43.72%	46.82%	44.88%	46.04%				
<b>Cost of Equity</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	8.17%	8.37%	8.13%	8.00%	8.28%	8.16%	8.67%	8.68%	8.55%	8.60%	8.62%	8.09%	8.07%	8.13%	8.40%	8.35%	8.34%	8.43%	7.88%	7.92%	8.12%	7.20%	7.51%	7.67%	7.79%			
<b>Share Price</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	\$405.07	\$396.17	\$394.72	\$377.79	\$341.19	\$331.84	\$29.65	\$317.21	\$343.44	\$375.79	\$375.68	\$385.31	\$308.09	\$273.46	\$237.21	\$238.69	\$321.74	\$397.75	\$521.23	\$623.19	\$649.27	\$714.05	\$792.94	\$821.40	\$860.22			
<b>Credit Rating</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	A-	
<b>Value Added</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	1,957.23	1,982.76	1,978.36	1,926.97	1,871.77	1,824.37	1,690.54	1,551.85	1,481.18	1,359.57	1,300.00	1,225.08	1,230.27	1,221.95	1,230.10	1,183.10	1,095.74	971.24	876.93	950.81	1,028.15	1,235.16	1,606.71	1,915.55	2,293.05	2,819.63	3,284.48	3,676.19
<b>Return on Equity</b>																												
<b>Simulation</b>	24.48%	25.83%	23.60%	20.46%	15.54%	20.81%	7.51%	5.65%	14.10%	15.04%	14.81%	16.18%	16.80%	14.54%	14.62%	2.47%	9.84%	-3.21%	0.61%	13.47%	21.90%	24.83%	25.88%	30.35%	26.53%	29.84%	35.99%	33.47%

